

***Actions and Accomplishments of the Los Angeles County
Judicial Procedures Commission***

2000-2003

1. On February 10, 1998, the Board of Supervisors asked the Judicial Procedures Commission to review options and offer recommendations on how and where to better serve self-represented litigants in the Los Angeles County court system with a particular emphasis on pro per litigants in Family Law Court. Out of that motion, a proposal for a pilot Self Help Legal Access Center was developed. In September 1999, the Board approved funding for this pilot project. Commissioner Kamenir-Reznik continued to work on the Self Help Legal Access Center in conjunction with the Department of Consumer Affairs, and Neighborhood Legal Services. The Department of Consumer Affairs released an RFP for the pilot project in April and on May 16 selected a contractor to recommend to the Board of Supervisors. In October, 2000, the Self Help Legal Access Center at the Van Nuys Courthouse held its Grand Opening.

Since the opening of the Self Help Legal Access Center at the Van Nuys Courthouse in October 2000, Commissioner Kamenir-Reznik, along with Consumer Affairs and Neighborhood Legal Services have continued to work on a project to expand the self help centers to other areas of the County. On June 13, 2003 a new center will be opening in Pomona, and on June 13th, the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held for the new center in Inglewood. In addition, a center has been opened in Antelope Valley, operating two days a week. The Committee group is currently seeking resources to provide funds for the center in Antelope Valley so that it can extend its hours of operation to five days a week.

2. On June 29, 1999, the Board of Supervisors asked the Judicial Procedures Commission to evaluate the waiting time at transaction windows in Municipal Courts throughout the County (now Superior Courts), to make an assessment of any problems and report back to the Board and the Courts with recommendations. In December 2000, Commissioners Rose and Millard presented to the Board a comprehensive list of recommendations to be considered by the Court in their efforts to provide improved service to the constituents of Los Angeles County. In March 2001, the Courts responded to the list of report findings, by presenting to the Commission a list of improvements to the current system that had taken place since the Court unification and other changes that were underway in the area of service provisions to the people of L.A. County.

3. In March 2000, the Commission, at the request of Commissioner Alpert, heard a presentation on repair problems at the Van Nuys Courthouse. The repairs on the seventh floor of the Van Nuys Courthouse have now been completed. Design plans to complete the remaining earthquake repairs on the entire building are being prepared and should be completed by October 2000. Bidding will begin in February 2001 to select a contractor to begin the project.
4. On March 21, 2000, the Board asked the Judicial Procedures Commission to work with the Courts, the Sheriff, and the Domestic Violence Council to study, develop and propose a pilot project which would formalize the process of child custody exchanges that take place at or near Sheriff's Stations. A Child Custody Exchange Committee group was developed to study this issue and develop recommendations, and in January 2001, presented recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

On January 14, 2003, the Child Custody Exchange Committee group in conjunction with the Los Angeles Superior Court submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting authorization to file a Letter of Intent to apply for a grant with the U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program for the implementation of two supervised child custody exchange locations. Currently, the Committee is waiting to hear whether the funding requested has been approved. In awarded, the funds will be utilized to implement two pilot child custody exchange centers; one in the Temple City Sheriff Station and the other in the Carson Sheriff Station.

5. On July 5, 2001, the Board of Supervisors requested the Commission on Judicial Procedures to work with the CAO and the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court to look into the feasibility of establishing child waiting rooms at Superior Court buildings. In response to this request, the Commission established an ad-hoc group on July 19, 2001, to study this issue and develop recommendations for submission to the Board of Supervisors.

On May 2, 2002, the Commission along with the ad-hoc group submitted the following recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approval implementation of the Superior Court Child Waiting Room pilot project to be administered by the Los Angeles Superior Court. Instruct the Chief Administrative Office to execute gratis license agreements for the use of the child waiting rooms by the child waiting room operators chosen by the Superior Court.
2. Approve implementation of a \$2 civil filing fee increase effective July 1, 2002, and a further increase effective July 1, 2004, pursuant to California Government Code Section 26826.3 for the operation of Superior Court child waiting rooms.

On June 25, 2002, the above mentioned recommendations were approved by the Board of Supervisors. Since that time, 4 of the proposed fourteen child waiting rooms have been opened in County Courthouses as follows:

Long Beach, July 1, 2002
Pomona, August 1, 2002
Compton, September 1, 2002
Stanley Mosk Courthouse, February 10, 2003

In addition, the Committee and the Superior Court are currently negotiating with the District Attorney's Office to procure a storeroom in the Clara Foltz Criminal Justice Center so that it can be changed into a child waiting room.

6. On July 19, 2001, the Commission established a committee group to look into the jury service operation and determine ways to improve the current system and enhance the conditions for jurors waiting to be assigned to a jury panel.
7. On May 21, 2002, the Commission submitted a recommendation to approve an ordinance change to delete obsolete municipal court ex-officio memberships on the Commission, and create additional ex officio memberships that would allow appointments from pertinent County Departments in addition to appointments from law enforcement and other legal agencies. As a result the following memberships have been approved for addition to the Commission:
 1. The President of Los Angeles County Bar Association
 2. The City Attorney of the largest populated city with the County
 3. The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of the County
 4. The Sheriff's Department
 5. The Executive Officer/Clerk of the Superior Court of the County
 6. The President of the Independent Cities Association

June 5, 2003